

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

SCOTT C., a minor individual, by and :
through his parents and natural :
guardians, SHARON C. AND PETER C. : No. 02-CV-4023
and SHARON C. AND PETER C., individually:
Plaintiffs, :
v. :
COLONIAL INTERMEDIATE UNIT 20 :
Defendant. :

**BRIEF IN SUPPORT OF MOTION TO DISMISS PURSUANT TO
FEDERAL RULE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE 12(b)(6)**

I. STATEMENT OF FACTS

Plaintiffs, Plaintiffs, Scott C., a m
Plaintiffs, Scott C., a minor, Shar
natural guardians of Scott C., have brou
natural guardians of Scott C., have bro
rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Sectio
rights under Se
Individuals with Disabili
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(§1983").

At all relevant times, Scott C. was a student who resided in the Bethlehem Area School District and attend a partial hospitalization program at Nitschmann Middle School in Bethlehem School District until the end of his ¶22) He entered the Freedom II program at Freedom High School in Bethlehem School District in September 1999 and remained in the tenth grade year. (Complaint, ¶24)

Plaintiff alleges that BASD served as the Local Plaintiff alleges that BASD served for for Scott while for Scott while he attended the CIU's partial programs for Scott while he for for providing Scott with a free appropriate public ed for providing Scott with (Complaint, ¶27)(Complaint, ¶27) (Complaint, ¶27) Plaintiff also alleges that Defendant C Unit Unit 20 (CIU 20") was paid by BASD for oversight of its special education department until the 2001-2002 school year a department until the responsibility for delivery of FAPE to Scott. (Complaint, ¶21)

Plaintiffs Complaint contends that CIU 20 discriminated against in in that it excluded Scott from his regular education, non-disabled peers, that his his instructional day was shorter than regular educati his instructional day was shorter the the curriculum the curriculum in CIU 20's the curriculum in CIU 20's partial programs was to those offered to non-disabled students. (Complaint, ¶29, 30, 33)

Plaintiffs also contend Plaintiffs also contend that Plaintiffs also contend provision of provision of educational services because provision of educational to to provide Scott with FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE to (Complaint, ¶1)

Count I of Plaintiffs Complaint alleges that CIU has violated Section Co b by by unlawfully segregating Scott while he was in CIU 20's partial prograby unlawfully its its mismanagement of BASD's special education programs througits mismanagement of of the 2000-2001 school year; that Scott was excluded from his non-disabled

peers; denied the benefits of equal education; and was subjected to discrimination while attending programs. (Complaint, ¶49,50)

Count II alleges that through the end of 2000, CIU 20 did not have its own, independent special education director and special education supervisors were CIU 20 employees and all decisions about Scott's programming were made by staff. (Complaint, ¶53) Plaintiff also alleges that CIU 20 violated the IDEA by failing to provide Scott with FAPE in the LRE.

Count III alleges that CIU 20 deprived Scott of his federal rights, including his right to FAPE in the LRE and discrimination. (Complaint, ¶56) Plaintiff also alleges that CIU 20 engaged in unlawful activities and the actions taken by CIU 20 were a product of official policy. (Complaint, ¶57)

Plaintiff has brought an identical complaint in District Court on the identical facts and setting. That matter is currently scheduled for trial in January 2003 before Judge Bruce W. Kauffman. (See at 642 and the underlying complaint)

II. STATEMENT OF ISSUES

A.A. WHETHER PLAINTIFFS COMPLAINT FAILS TOA. WHETHER PLAINTIFFS COMPLAINT
UNDER §504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Suggested Answer: Yes.

B.B. WHETHER PLAINTIFFS COMPLB. WHETHER PLAINTIFFS COMPLAINT B. WHETHER UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES ACT?

Suggested Answer: Yes.

C.C. WHETHER PLAINTIFFS COMPLAINT FAILS TO STC. WHETHER PLAINTIFFS COMPLAINT
UNDER 42 U.S.C. SECTION 1983?

Suggested Answer: Yes.

III. ARGUMENT

STANDARD APPLICABLE TO FED.R.CIV.P. 12(b)(6)

When determining a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court must accept as true all well pleaded allegations in the complaint and its attachments. Jordon v. Fox, Rothschild, O'Brien & Frankel, 20 F.3d 1250, 1261 (3d Cir. 1994). The court must view the facts in the light most favorable to the plaintiff. Inc., 764 F.2d 939, 944 (3d Cir. 1985). A Rule 12(b)(6) motion is appropriate when a plaintiff cannot prove any set of facts, which would entitle him or her to relief. 401 (3d Cir. 1988)

However, a pleading is not sufficient to state a claim for relief unless it contains sufficient facts to state a claim for relief that is characterized as a claim for relief. Fleming v. Lind-Wald Co., 922 F.2d 20, 23, 24 (1st C Cir. 1990); The Dartmouth Review v. Dartmouth College, 889 F.2d 13 (1st Cir 1989); Vandenplas v. City of Muskego, 753 F.2d 555, 560 (7th Cir. 1985).

Most often, facts are susceptible to objective Most often, facts
Conclusions, on the other hand, are Conclusions, on the other
usual case. They represent the pleader usual case. They represent the
called inferences from, called inferences from, the called inferences
such conclusions such conclusions such conclusions are such conclusions
the stated facts, that is, when the suggested inference rises to
what what what experience indicates is an acceptable level of probability
that conclusions become facts for pleading purposes.

Dartmouth College, at 13.

Bare legal conclusions Bare legal conclusions Bare legal conclusions attached to
Strauss v. City of Chicago, 760 F.2d 765, 768 (7th Cir. 1985) (“[Bare legal conclusions are] conclusions drawn without supporting facts or reasoning.”);
 shold reject legal conclusions , unsupported conclusions , unwarranted
 inferences , inferences , unwarranted deductions , footless inferences , unwarranted
 sweeping legal conclusions in the form of sweeping legal conclusions.
Lower Merion School District, 132 F.3d 902, n.8 (3d Cir. 1997) *quoting*, Chas.
 A.A. Wright and Arthur L. Miller, FEDERAL PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE § 33:1 (West 1997); see also, Leeds v. Meltz, 85 F.3d 51, 53 (2d Cir. 1996) (affirming
 dismissal of § 1983 action and noting that while the plaintiff’s allegations were liberal one, bald assertions and liberal ones).

suffice. suffice.); Fernandez-Montes v. Allied Pilots Ass'n, 987 F.2d 2 (1993)(1993)(co1993)(conclusory1993)(conclusory allegations or legal conclusions may not suffice. conclusions will not suffice to prevent a motion to dismiss.).

Here,Here, the facts Here, the facts interpreted in the light most favorableHere, the facts that that Plaintiff fails that Plaintiff fails satisfy the above that Plaintiff fails satisfy the above Complaint Complaint against Complaint against CIU 20 actually sounds in Breach of Contract neither of which are pled. Accordingly neither of which are pled. Accordingly, neither of which are be granted.

A.A. COUNT I OF PLAINTIFFS A. COUNT I OF PLAINTIFFS COMPLAINT UNDER SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Plaintiffs Plaintiffs claim that Defendant CIU 20 unlawfully while he was enrolled while he was enrolled in the pa while he was enrolled in the pa mismanaged mismanaged BASD s special education programs through tmismanaged BASD 2001 school year. Plaintiffs claim 2001 school year. Plaintiffs claim to to exhaust their administrative remedies against CIU 20; BASD, not CIU to exhaust their administrative party party ultimately responsible for compliance with party ultimately responsible for compliance 504 does not furnish a basis for affirmative relief.

Initially it is noted that the Bethlehem School District party party ultimately responsible party party ultimately responsible party party ultimately responsible party Springs School District v. Cmwlth of Pa. Dept. of Education A.2d 943 (Cmwlth. Ct. 1984), a school district A.2d 943 (Cmwlth. Ct. 1984), a school district

decreased certain services. The case raised the isdecreased certain ser
 responsibility for responsibility for educating handi
 relevant partthe authorities establish overwhrelevant partthe authorit
 rresponsibility for identifying all exceptional children and c
 appropriate educational programs to meet their needs is placedappropriate
 school districts. Bermudian Springs at 945.

The Pennsylvania Public School Code Section 1372(3) provides:

SpecialSpecial Classes or Schools Established and Maintained by School
 Districts.

ExceptExcept as hereiExcept as herein oExcept as herein otherwise provide
board of school directors of everyboard of school directors of every s
 maintain, maintain, or to jointlmaintain, or to jointly pmaintain, or to join
 ddistricts, districts, special classes or schools in accordance wdistricts,
 approved plan... If tapproved plan... If the approvapproved pla
 feasible to form a special class in any district orfeasible to form a spe
 educationeducation for such child in the public schools of the
 boardboard of school directors of the district shall secure suchboar
 educationeducation and training outsideeducation and training outside the
 or in special institutions, or in special institutions, or in special institution
 his home...

24 P.S. 13-1372(3)(emphasis added)

InIn contrast, 24 P.S. Section 1372(4) of the CodeIn contrast, 24 P.S. Section 137
 powerspowers and duties of the Intermediatepowers and duties of the Intermedia
 administer, administer, supervise and operate suchadminister, supervise and oper
 areare necessary or to otherwise provide for the proper education and
 trainingtraining for all exceptional children who atraining for all exceptional chil

schools maintained and operated by schools maintained and operated otherwise provided for. 24 P.S. Section 1372(4)(emphasis added)

The Court in Bermudian Springs further opined:

The regulations of the Department are even more explicit in placing the primary responsibility for special education programs on the local school districts. 22 Pa. Code §13.11(b) identifies the school districts the responsibility for special education or training, or both, shall be that of a school district. A school district board cannot effectively and efficiently, it shall use effectively and efficiently an intermediate unit. The services of approved private intermediate schools, and out-of-state institutions hereinafter provided, district boards agree to provide effectively and efficiently for handicapped school children.

Finally, this court has repeatedly cited the districts' responsibility for special education in Krawitz v. Department of Education, 48 Pa. C.A.2d 1202, 1205 (1979)...

Bermudian Springs at 946 *quoting* 22 Pa.Code §13.11(b)

Plaintiffs' §504 claim should further be barred for failing to exhaust available administrative remedies. The Court in W.B. v. Matula, 67 F.3d 492 (1995), opined that the circumstances determine whether administrative proceedings would have been futile:

...The test whether exhaustion will be futile and the exhaustion requirement is excused. *Id.*, at 496.

Recourse to administrative proceedings is futile where the Hearing Officer lacks the authority to grant the relief at 496 *citing* House Report, 1986, U.S.C. C.A.N. at 7"

Matula, 67 F.3d at 496-97.

None of the claims for §504 relief are outside the None of the claims for §504 relief could have easily been addressed within the context of the related services.

To establish a violation of §504, Plaintiffs must demonstrate that: 1) the child is disabled as defined by the Act; 2) he is otherwise disabled as defined by the Act; 3) the school or the board of education receives federal financial assistance; 4) he was excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or was subject to discrimination at, a program or activity that it knew or should have known of his exclusion, denial of benefits, or discrimination. Education v. N.E. for M.E., 172 F.3d 238, 253, 172 F.3d 238, 253 (3d Cir. 1999), cert. denied, 528 U.S. 1107, 124 S.Ct. 2901, 140 L.Ed.2d 484, 492 (1995).

There appear to be few differences, if any, between IDEA's "duty" and §504's negative prohibition. Indeed, the regulations implementing §504 adopt the IDEA language, requiring that "any entity that receives federal financial assistance shall provide a free appropriate public education to each qualified handicapped person who is in its jurisdiction." Matula at 493 *quoting* 34 C.F.R. §104.33(a).

Section 504 has been described as the codification of equal protection for handicapped persons, H 1362, 1362, 11362, 1366 (1989) *quoting Association for Retarded Citizens in Colorado v. Frazier*, 517 F.Supp. 105, 118 (D. Colo. 1981), re requirement of nondiscrimination in all re requirement of nondiscrimination in all re at 1366 *quoting New Mexico Association for Retarded Citizens v. New Mexico*, 678 F.2d 847, 852 (10th Cir. 1982). Beyond its prohibition, however, Section 504 generally does not furnish re to the handicapped. Gilhool at 1366 *quoting Southeastern Community College v. Davis*, 442 U.S. 397, 410-11, 60 L.Ed. 2d 980, 99 S.Ct. 2361 (1979)

There is no accommodation outside of the IEP. The allegations contain more than restatements of the alleged IDEA in §504 are therefore subsumed by the IDEA in §504 are therefore evidence in the record to support Plaintiff's evidence in the record to support of those claims which are arguably outside the scope of the IDEA

Plaintiffs' Complaint fails to allege establish that Plaintiffs were deprived of a constitutional recovery can lie against Defendant's requests this Honorable Court grant their

Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), and dismiss the Defendants as p

B.B. COUNT II OF PLAINTIFFS COMPLAB. COUNT II OF PLAINTIFFS COMPLAINT FAILS.
UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (IDEA)

Plaintiffs' action for IDEA violation should be barred by the exhaustion of administrative remedies, specifically the due process against CIU 20 for any alleged failure to implement CIU 20's IEP. As argued above, CIU 20 is not an LEA obligated to provide FAPE. Plaintiffs pursued due process against the Bethlehem Area School District but not CIU 20. (See appendix to Plaintiffs' Complaint)

[illegible]

As a general rule, an aggrieved party must invoke a state's administrative procedures before bringing an IDEA claim in federal court. 20 U.S.C. §1415(e)(2); W.B. v. Matula 67 F.3d 484, 490 (6th Cir. 1997). 1415(i)(2) of IDEA adds to this exhaustion requirement by noting that bringing claims under other statutes that seek relief that is also available under this subchapter, the administrative procedures of those statutes apply.

shall be exhausted to the same extent as if the action had been brought under this subchapter. See Hunter v. Mount Lebanon School District, 95 F.3d 272, 277 (3d Cir. 1996).

Section 1415(i)(2) is designed to preclude plaintiffs from taking claims that could have been brought under other statutes. *Id.* at 277

The exhaustion requirements of IDEA are specifically favored course of action. This is because the favored course of action is to permit state and local educational agencies to cooperate with the parents or guardians of the child in the responsibility for formulating the education to be accorded to the child. Board of Education v. Rowley, 458 U.S. 176, 207 (1982).

Given the underlying purpose of IDEA, exceptions to the exhaustion requirement are rare. See Matula. In fact, only when it is shown that recourse to an administrative proceeding would be futile or that the exhaustion requirement excused.¹ A plaintiff must show that that pursuit of administrative remedies would be futile is insufficient to invoke the exception to exhaustion requirement. Hunter v. Mount Lebanon School District, 95 F.3d 272 (3d Cir. 1996).

¹Another reason why IDEA mandates the development of a factual record to be developed. See W.B. v. Matula, 67 F.3d 484, 489

In the case at bar, any statement by Plaintiffs that in the case at bar, any administrative remedies would be exhausted is an exception to the exhaustion requirement. Scott C. and his parents have exhausted their administrative remedies against Bethlehem School District, Plaintiffs failed to exhaust their administrative remedies against CIU 20. Indeed, the pursuit of administrative remedies against CIU 20 conclusively admits that administrative remedies were exhausted. It is apparent that Plaintiffs present suit is an attempt to circumvent the exhaustion requirement and its progeny support excusing the administrative exhaustion on the basis of oversight or second thought. IDEA procedures have been exhausted against CIU 20 and there has been no factual record developed.

Plaintiffs' Complaint fails to allege facts, which if proven establish that Plaintiffs were deprived of a constitutional right to recovery can lie against Defendant CIU 20. Accordingly, CIU 20 no recovery can lie against CIU 20. This Honorable Court grant their Motion pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), and dismiss the Defendants as parties to this action.

C.C. COUNT C. COUNT III OF PLAINTC. COUNT III OF PLAINTIFFS COMPLAINT FAILS TO S
UNDER 42 U.S.C. SECTION 1983.

AnyAny liability pursuant to §1983Any liability pursuant to §1983 is predicated upon the same cause of action as the IDEA cause of action. Therefore, any claim for damages under §1983 must fail for the same reasons as the IDEA cause of action.

The Third Circuit in W.B. v. Matula, 67 F.3d 484 (3d. Cir. 1995) discusses the nature of the §1983 right of action as it impacts IDEA and §504:

[6][6] Section 1983 does not confer substantive rights, be merely redresses the deprivation of those rights. Those rights may be created by the Constitution or federal statute; and hence in a §1983 action a federal statutory violations by state agents. Maine v. T 448 U.S. 1, 5-6, 100 S.Ct. 2502, 2504-05, 65448 U.S. 1, 5-6, 100 S.Ct. 2502, 2504- encompasses claims based on federal law)

[7][7] When the rights at issue are statutory, however, it is impermissible when Congress intended to foreclose private enforcement. Wright v. Roanoke Redevelopment Housing Authority, 479 U.S. 418, 423, 107, 479 U.S. 418, 423, 107 S. 781 (1987). Such an intent is generally found either in the express language of a statute or where a statutory remedial language of a statute is comprehensive that an intent to prohibit enforcement by the statute's own means may be inferred. *Id.*

Matula 67 F.3d 484

Notwithstanding the standards required to attain liability under §1983 still pertain.² To establish liability against the Intermediate must establish more than negligence on the part of the School officials. To establish liability under §1983, the §1983, the Parents must show that the Intermediate U

²While under Matul damages could be available under §1415(e)(2) for mere provide FAPE, a higher standard must be met to provide FAPE, a School District, 141 F.3d 524 (4th Cir. 1998)(discusses incompatibility standards.)

recklessly established and maintained a policy, practice and custom that caused a constitutional harm or denied Scott C. his statutory rights. D.D.R. v. D.R. v. L.R. v. Middle Bucks Area Vocational Technical School, 972 F.2d 1364 (3d Cir. 1992). The facts related in Plaintiff's Complaint simply do not establish liability against CIU 20 under §1983 liability provisions. The facts show nothing more than a difference of opinion regarding Scott C.'s educational program. It is significant in this regard that the Appeals Panel attached to the Complaint does not deny Scott C. FAPE during the 1998-1999 school year and that the proposed IEP for the 1999-2000 school year was appropriate.

Plaintiffs' Complaint fails to establish liability under §1983. [A] local government is not liable for injuries inflicted solely by its employees or officials. Instead, it is when execution of a government's policy or custom made by its lawmakers or by those edicts or acts may fairly be said to represent official policy, inflicts the injury that the government is responsible under 1983". Monell v. Dep't. of Soc. Serv. 436 U.S. 690, 694.

A single, isolated incident is insufficient to establish that Defendant School District had a policy, practice and custom. See

establish establish a pattern of behavior. Beck v. City of Pittsburgh, 89 F.3d 966, 972 (3rd Cir. 1996). In order for liability to be imposed, Cir. 1996). In order for liability to be imposed, a pattern of persistent and widespread unconstitutional practice of Defendant Defendant CIU 20 that had become so permanent and well settled as to have the force and effect of law. Monell, 436 U.S. 658 (1978). School District of St. Louis Co., 901 F.2d 642, 646 (8th Cir. 1990). See also, Beck v. City of Pittsburgh, 89 F.3d 966, 972 (3rd Cir. 1996) (sufficient number of civil complaints regarding use of excessive force by police department knew or should have known of the behavior in arresting citizens, even when the arrest was in an orderly fashion, complied with the law, and the individual offered no resistance); Simmons v. City of Philadelphia, 915 F.2d 845, 853 (3rd Cir. 1991) (evidence that city of Philadelphia officials were aware of suicides in city lockups and of the alternatives for dealing with them, either deliberately chose not to pursue those alternatives, or had a long-standing policy or custom of inaction in this regard); Blinn v. City of Pittsburgh, 915 F.2d 845, 853 (3rd Cir. 1990) (sufficient evidence that the long-established custom in the city of Pittsburgh police department of arresting and detaining individuals on charges of public intoxication without probable cause and with no probable cause and with no probable cause and with no

hearing)

Proof of the mere existence
 insufficient to maintain a
 burden of proving that the municipal burden of p
 the injuries suffered. Losch v. Borough of Parkesburg, Losch v. Borough of Parkesbu
 (3rd Cir. 1984). To establish the Cir. 1984). To establish the neces Cir. 1984).
 demonstrated a plausible nexus or affirmative link between th
 municipality's custom and the specific deprivation of constitutional munic
 issue. *Id.* (Citations omitted). Such can be accomplished by demonstra (Citation
 that policymakers are aware of similar that policymak
 precautions against future violations, and that this failure, precautions again
 to their injury. *Id.* At 851.

Plaintiffs Complaint fails to allege facts, which if proven Plaintiffs
 establish that Plaintiffs were deprived of a constitutional
 no recovery can lie against Defendant CIU 20. no recovery can lie against Defendant CI
 request this Honorable Court grant their Motion pursuant to request this Honora
 Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), and dismiss the Defendants as partie

IV. CONCLUSION

Plaintiffs Complaint clearly fails to state a claim under Defendant CIU 20. Accordingly, the Motion of Defendant CIU 20 under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) should be granted and the complaint dismissed as a party Defendant.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

KING, SPRY, HERMAN, FREUND & FAUL

John E. Freund, Esquire
One West Broad Street
Suite 700
Bethlehem, PA 18018
610.332.0390
ID No. 25390